

IT'S YOUR HONOR

Comments on the Rules

TO THE USGA:

The purpose of this letter is to express dissatisfaction with several changes in the Rules of Golf (1956).

I can imagine no valid reason for Rule 34, Flagstick. Why should any player or competitor, at his discretion, have the advantage of the flagstick, from any distance? The elimination of chance is, of course, impossible, but to minimize chance is necessary if skill is to be the deciding factor. Under the old rule the opponent had an option. He was not required to stand idly by and let the player, who had missed the green in the first place, have the advantage of the flag. In friendly rounds the player is chipping or making even short approach putts with the flag in the hole, unless he needs the shot for a half. He has recognized his advantage and is taking it.

The following remarks were heard in such a round the other day. The player, faced with a 15-foot downhill putt said, as he motioned for the caddy to move away and leave the flag in the hole, "I wish I could lay the flag down". His opponent remarked, "They are working up to it; that'll be legal next year". It's my opinion the committee recognized the advantage accruing to the player from this rule or they would not have recommended the diameter of the flagstick be limited to three-quarters of an inch. If this be true they also had to realize that the rule was wrong in principle, whether the flagstick be no larger in diameter than a straight pin or extended beyond the edges of the cup. This, by the way, is not prohibited.

Rule 35-2A—Why should the player be given the advantage of his opponent's ball in addition to the flagstick?

This Rule is even worse than Rule 34. Now, because of their position on or around the green, one player or the other will have an unfair advantage before the hole is finished. He finds himself in the position of having two objects with a total recommended width of 2.43 inches (ball 1.68 and flagstick .75) that he may use as will benefit him most. Meanwhile his opponent stands to one side wondering where fair play can be in a set-up such as this. I don't know the origin, but I heard an old Scotsman say some thirty years ago, "When there are no stymies, there shall be no guides". What could be fairer than that? Now we have lost the stymies and gained the guides together with a backstop.

To my mind the institution of these Rules could only come about in an effort to speed play and simplify the Rules. It would, of course, be desirable to accomplish either or both of these things. But what a price the game is being made to pay for such questionable accomplishments!

BOB LOWRY, SR.
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Turf Progress

TO THE USGA:

We have followed your suggestions to the Nth degree and our greens are the talk of Atlanta. On our fairways we have never seen Bermuda come out so fast. Our mowers are running from morning to night each day. On the first of the month we are planning to put our third round of fertilizer of ammonium nitrate, as you suggested. It looks like we will have to keep two sets of gang mowers to handle this.

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